

RISE

Retrofit information,
support & expertise

Retrofit Success Stories: Building skills and careers through social housing retrofit in Manchester

Case study

January 2026

Funded by:



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

Contents

Contents	2
Retrofit Success Stories.....	3
Introduction:.....	3
Background	3
Billy's personal motivation	4
Experience on Hamilton Lodge Works	4
Careers Advice to other Young People	6

Retrofit Success Stories

This series aims to explore the individual stories and experiences of successful retrofit projects from the perspective of key suppliers. This covers a range of themes from technology use through renewable energy and low carbon heating to the career progression and skill development that projects are enabling.

Introduction:

This Retrofit Success Stories case study showcases Billy's experience working at **Casey**, supporting **One Manchester** who received £550,000 - as part of **Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA)** £37m consortium bid - under the **Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1**. Billy's account explores his personal motivations for working in the sector, and his specific contributions to **Hamilton Lodge Works project in Rusholme**. He also offers some advice to young people getting into the industry.

Billy Adrian is a Trainee Assistant Site Manager at Casey working on the Hamilton Lodge SHDF Wave 2.1 project and has been with the company for about 6 months (as of August 2025). Billy's responsibilities include assisting in managing the day-to-day operation of the site and acting as Resident Liaison Officer for Hamilton Lodge. This involves putting in ground source heating works, fitting windows, and installing radiators and cylinders, and keeping residents informed and engaged about the retrofit works taking place.

Background

One Manchester

One Manchester is a registered provider of social housing which owns and manages over 12,000 homes in Central, South, and East Manchester. The organisation's purpose is to provide good quality homes, great services, and real opportunities for its customers and communities.

One Manchester received £550,000 - as part of Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA) £37m consortium bid - under the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1.

This Government grant funding upgraded 164 homes with energy efficiency measures – including loft and cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation, energy-efficient windows and doors and renewable heating systems such as air source heat pumps. The SHDF scheme was renamed to the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (WH:SHF) in September 2024.

Casey

Casey is an award-winning, Manchester-based, family-owned construction and development organisation known for delivering refurbishment, new-build housing, civil engineering, and environmental works across the Northwest. Their work focuses on “improving lives” by creating high-quality places for people to live and by supporting community-centred regeneration. Casey has long been involved in public-sector housing projects, including refurbishment and maintenance for registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities, which places them in a key role delivering upgrades aligned with wider Government-funded housing improvement and retrofit programmes. Their expertise in large-scale housing refurbishment, property development, and environmental works enables them to support councils and housing providers in improving energy performance and modernising homes as part of broader regeneration and sustainability initiatives.

Billy’s personal motivation

Billy’s pathway into housing retrofit began at Oldham College, where studying T-Level Design, Planning and Surveying—and the encouragement of a tutor who he recalls as “*an absolutely wonderful bloke*”—helped shape his ambition to make a real difference in the built environment. His work-placement experience became a turning point: although several companies showed interest, Billy admitted, “*I was quite nervous... I didn’t know who to choose.*” What set Casey apart was their personal, human approach. As he described, “*They gave me the time of day and treated me like a person,*” with Steve Goodwin even helping him with his college project.

That sense of support drew him in, and during his six-week placement, he found himself inspired by the teamwork around him—“*seeing how brilliantly they worked together and what they could achieve on their projects really inspired me.*” This encouragement propelled him to apply for the Apprentice Site Manager role, and the moment he found out he had secured the job—“*I was with my nan and grandad... I was absolutely ecstatic*”—marked the beginning of a career driven by purpose, learning, and a commitment to improving homes through retrofit.

Experience on Hamilton Lodge Works

Billy is now playing a pivotal role in housing retrofit through his work on the Hamilton Lodge refurbishment project in Rusholme, where new ground source heating, windows, radiators, and cylinders are being installed in every flat. As both Assistant Site Manager and Resident Liaison Officer, he sees his purpose as supporting residents through the process, explaining, “*I have to deal with the residents and accommodate all their needs and questions.*”

What fuels his growth is the supportive culture at Casey, where colleagues have guided him not only in technical skills but in the people-centred communication essential to retrofit delivery. “*If it weren’t for the people on this site, I would not be anywhere near as good as what I am now,*” he reflected.



Building trust with residents is at the heart of his approach; for Billy, “building a relationship... and having that glass wall between us of pure clarity” is what makes the work possible. The encouragement and teamwork he experiences every day is what inspires him most: “My favourite thing about this job is the people... everyone I've run into at Casey has been nothing but lovely... I've always seen people supporting people.” Through this blend of technical contribution, resident care, and supportive mentorship, Billy is shaping a meaningful career in retrofit—and making a real difference to the homes and communities he serves.

Maintaining rapport with residents

Billy's role at Hamilton Lodge has become as much about people as it is about retrofit delivery and nowhere is that clearer than in the relationship he has built with residents like Bobby, the resident representative for the project. Billy describes him as “an absolutely amazing fella,” someone he speaks to almost daily to maintain open communication and trust. Their first meeting turned into “about 1 hour of conversation,” with Bobby curious about Billy's journey and impressed to see someone so young taking on such responsibility.

Examples of positive resident engagement and continuous communication has become central to the project's success, with Billy acting as the single point of contact whenever changes affect residents, ensuring everyone is kept informed and reassured. As he explains, residents have been “very accepting of the work,” and Bobby is eager to understand the ground source heating system—questions Billy is “more than happy” to answer. His approach is rooted in empathy and clarity: “I'm constantly reassuring him that even though we are doing some pretty disruptive works, in the grand scheme of things, we are just here to improve their lives.” Through consistency, honesty, and genuine connection, Billy is building the kind of resident engagement that transforms retrofit from a construction project into a community-centred collaboration.

Energy bill saving for residents

Billy speaks about ground source heat pumps with genuine enthusiasm; driven by the difference he sees them making to residents' lives. What excites him most is not just the engineering behind the system— “a hole drilled 150 metres down... fluid pressurised... heat from the ground warming the water to about 60 degrees”—but the human outcome it creates. As he explains, “The best thing about the Ground Source Heat Pump is seeing the residents save money, which they could spend to improve their quality of life in other aspects... enjoying their life instead of worrying about bills.”

For Billy, the impact is especially meaningful for older and more vulnerable residents who will now stay warm through winter: “They'll be able to afford their heating, and they will not be cold... in some extreme cases even freezing in the colder months.” He reflects on this with empathy, adding, “If my family was in this position... I'd want a company like Casey to be on site to provide something like this for them.” Through his work, Billy isn't just helping deliver a retrofit project—he's

helping deliver comfort, dignity, and financial relief to the people who need it most.

Billy's video documentary to support resident engagement

Billy took the initiative to create a documentary-style video about the Hamilton Lodge project. He enjoys watching YouTube freelance documentaries and aimed to make the video both informative and engaging for residents. "I shot and edited the video, in mind of what I'd want to see if I was watching a video like that". Billy was aware that this needed to be engaging and support the opportunity to learn about low carbon heating technology that is being employed more regularly.

Billy completed the video and voiceover himself, even editing a "trailer-esque approach to it". The reaction was overwhelming, and everyone was really happy to see the final result.

Careers Advice to other Young People

Billy encouraged young people to gain valuable work experience and demonstrate their value to potential employers. "Prove to them why you are worth investing in, and why they should put money into you to put you through university or college".

He described his hard work ethic and advised that if someone wanted to follow his career path, they should take every opportunity presented to them: "I would encourage people to get work experience, unpaid work experience, and work as hard as you can for as long as you can. If the company is willing to take you on for six weeks, get there an hour early every single day. Leave there an hour late every single day". Billy sees this as an investment in his future and his future in the company.



Link to resources referenced:

[One Manchester](#)

[Casey](#)

Links to relevant RISE resources:

[Planning resident engagement](#)

[Understanding Heat Pumps](#)



www.riseretrofit.org.uk



RISE – Retrofit information, support & expertise